REMARKS

The Examiner's continued attention to the present application is noted with appreciation.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 5-9, 13-17, and 21-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacobson in view of Fields, and claims 2-4, 10-12, and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacobson in view of Fields and Kelly. The rejections are traversed.

Jacobson discloses neither an "index server" nor a "hierarchical plurality of topic categories". Rather, Jacobson discloses a hardware server that maintains indexes (it does not serve to users the indexes themselves) and a plurality of topic categories that is not hierarchical, but rather is flat.

The present invention provides a system by which users can customize a preexisting web index after which the index itself is "served" into the user's web page. Note that the term "index server" is not used in an exclusive hardware context. In other words, an index server is a system, and not merely a hardware "server," that dynamically "serves" the customized index onto the user's web site. Jacobson is merely a server that maintains indexes, receives queries, and provides matching items from the index, and which has flat user-defined non-hierarchical categories available for use to limit search results.

As to a hierarchical plurality of topic categories, Jacobson has "region-sets", which the examiner equates to topic categories. The regions in the region-set would then apparently be considered the sub-topics. Jacobson defines each region in the region-sets as a web site on the Internet. So a region might be att.com/bala. Every web page that falls under the tree structure of the web page is part of the region. For example, att.com/bala/page1 and att.com/bala/page1/section1 would be part of the att.com/bala region. Thus the hierarchy in Jacobson is the sub-tree of the web site! The region-sets in Jacobson are not "a hierarchical plurality of topic categories." They are a one-dimensional list of web pages (or regions). In other words, in Jacobsen the topic categories are not hierarchical, but rather the contents of the topic categories are hierarchical. Jacobsen is even less hierarchical than Jain (the primary reference in earlier office actions) in this regard.

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In the present invention, the hierarchy is that of a web index with topic categories and sub topics. The topic categories do not have to fall into the tree structure of a web site. For example, the sports categories might be at www.rockinternet.com/sports and its sub-category of basketball might be at www.rockinternet.com/ball/basketball, which would not be in the sub-tree of www.rockinternet.com/sports. Instead, the present invention employs the structure of a web index. The hierarchy is set by the pattern of the html links on the pages, not by the physical locations of the pages themselves. In this manner, the present invention employs and serves to user web pages a hierarchical plurality of topics categories. In the present invention, the topic categories themselves are in a hierarchy, and the contents of the topic categories may or may not be.

Because the region-sets of Jacobson are not hierarchical, one cannot permit "a user to specify any subset" of a hierarchy. In the present invention, a user can take a web index and select which of the topic categories they would like included in their customized web index. This customization is available many layers deep into the sub-topics. In Jacobson, each user cannot set up the core region-sets; they are set up for the user. The user's only ability in Jacobson is to use set logic on the region-sets to obtain a new set to search on. But each user does not customize the core region-sets. Even if a user could customize the core region sets in Jacobson, they would not be able to customize the regions. In the present invention, a user can drill down into the sub-topics, the sub-sub-topics, the sub-sub-sub-topics, etc., and specify a subset at each level. In fact, in Jacobson, the user is unable to customize the regions in any way because the regions are web sites on the Internet and are not controlled by Jacobson's invention. In other words, Jacobson does not permit the user to specify any subset of a hierarchical collection of topics.

Neither of the subordinate references cure the deficiencies of Jacobson noted above. Accordingly, the cited combinations do not disclose the present invention as claimed. A number of points

could be made with respect to the dependent claims, but in that the independent claims are patentable, the dependent claims are as well.

Being filed herewith is a Petition for Extension of Time to May 8, 2006, with the appropriate fee. Authorization is given to charge payment of any additional fees required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Acct. 13-4213. A duplicate of this paper is enclosed for accounting purposes.

An earnest attempt has been made to respond to each and every ground of rejection advanced by the Examiner. However, should the Examiner have any queries, suggestions or comments relating to a speedy disposition of the application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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